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and the rigorously circumscribed privileges of the journalist and the public speaker. A man may outrage every principle of virtue, every instinct of modesty, every decent manly and womanly feeling, if he is a novelist, a dramatic author, or a stage manager. He may publish novels of which Mrs. Aphra Behn or Crebillon the younger would be ashamed; he may write and act plays which surpass Wycherley in immorality, and are only inferior to him in talent; he may crowd a stage with troops of women, who, like Eve, are not ashamed—but, unlike Eve, are shameless. All this he may do in Paris to-day, and if he does it successfully he will be the hero of the hour; he will be the delight of the fashionable world, and will be sure of a welcome even in the inner circles of Imperialism. The contagion has spread to England, and the press protests against the importation of the new French fashion into their fiction as into their millinery. "No one who reads the English novels or reviews on English novels can fail to perceive the sudden and hateful change which of late has come over the character of our literature. It does not, of course, affect our best writers. Those who only read Dickens and George Elliot, and Miss Mulock may be happily ignorant of the depraving influences which are at work. But the second and the third class novels! Goethe satirised what he aptly described as the Literature of Despair. We have now in England a Literature of Adultery. No other words will fittingly describe it;" and the *Star* has not indeed much inclination to seek for vague and graceful phrases in which to hint gently at its real character.

Our readers will remember the Sermons of a "Hard Shell Baptist," which went the rounds of the press, creating much amusement some years ago. It appears that their author was Mr. William P. Brannan, at the time a portrait-painter in Louisiana or Mississippi, and at present associate editor of the Cincinnati *National Union*.

Mr. Samuel Bowles, of the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican*, author of "Across the Continent," was recently chosen by the Massachusetts Legislature a Trustee of Amherst College.

FINE-ARTS ITEMS.

We have been shown, within a few days, a miniature of Washington, of the highest authenticity and value, which has escaped the notice of collectors, and, so far as we can learn, appears never to have been described. Indeed, if it had not been for the war, it might have continued unknown for another generation. It is painted on an oval piece of ivory, three inches and three quarters long by two and a quarter inches wide, which has been broken in two. The separation is longitudinal, and, fortunately, just shears, by a hair's breadth, the right side of the head. In skillful hands the ivory can be mended, and, once mounted on leather, the injury need never be perceived. But the wisest plan, in such cases, is to attempt no repairs. Least of all, should the owner, or purchaser, allow it to be touched with the pencil. It is were ours we should leave it precisely as it is. The miniature is signed in full with the artist's name, the date and place when and where it was painted. "P. A. Peticolas, p'xit 1796, Philadelphia." The signature is at the lower left hand corner of the background, just above the shoulder. Dunlop, in his "History of the Arts of Design in America," vol. II., p. 321, has a short notice of an Edward F. Peticolas—spelling the name with

two "ts"—but he says nothing of his father, who was the painter of the present miniature. Mr. Sully of Philadelphia, the well-known and much respected artists, remembers P. A. Peticolas, and told Dunlop that he gave the son lessons in oil painting, for which the father paid him by giving lessons in music to Mrs. Sully. It seems a little remarkable that Dunlop should not allude to the father as a miniature painter; for, if we may judge by this specimen of his skill, he was clever enough to deserve mention. But Dunlop was not very accurate. This miniature is in the possession of the grandson of the painter, to whom it descended from his father, and who now offers it for sale with formal guarantees of its authenticity. It has always been looked upon as very valuable, and is only sold because, in the siege of Petersburg, the owner lost his house and all his movable property. There can be no reasonable doubt of its authenticity, and, indeed, it appears, to us, to carry its own assurance with it. It is a very interesting portrait. One can hardly believe that this mouth, so firm yet so mobile, so sensitive and sweet, is the cold, unsympathetic slit that Stuart saw and painted. We feel that this Washington could have loved and hated. It is impossible to look into the face of Washington without reverence, but, as we hold this miniature in our hands, the heart, for once, is stirred.

Mr. Avery has at his rooms a small picture by Mr. McEwen which deserves praise. The subject is homespun enough, being simply a young boy who has been set to rock the cradle in which his baby brother is asleep. In order not to lose time, he has fastened a string to the cradle, and tilting his chair against the wall, pulls the string back and forth, and buries himself in his story-book. This is a genuine Yankee expedient of book-loving, task-shirking boys, and we doubt not that many a person who sees this little picture will smile in sympathy, remembering how he used to do just so. The whole picture is a bit of pure unaffected nature, in treatment, and is well painted. At a first glance it seems a very natural thing to choose such a subject, and a very easy thing to paint it; but, excepting Eastman Johnson, we do not know another artist who dares take a genuine American country kitchen or sitting-room and paint it exactly as it is, without adding something that he thinks a little more refined, or leaving out something that he thinks ugly. Eastman Johnson has done it—he painted a sheet-iron stove once, and made it almost beautiful, it was so true. So, here, in a picture in the large room he has painted a genuine American rocking-chair, all wood, no hair-cloth or stuffing—and room to match. But he never did anything more genuine than this little interior of Mr. McEwen. "Oh but," says one, "this is not high art!" Well, God be thanked, it isn't; but it is a better preparation for a real art than most of the work our young men are busy with. High art worthy the name will never come by straining for it. It will come when humility and study and a genuine love of truth have paved the way for it, and not before.

THE HOME OF VICTOR HUGO.

To the northwest of France, hidden in the mystic vapors of the ocean, lies a fortunate archipelago. The gulf stream there brings out a flora worthy of the fairest isles of the Adriatic and Mediterranean. Geologists tell us what revolution detached this Norman soil from the Norman coast, and relate how the sea, invading the immense bay which separates Cherbourg from Brest, only suffered those rocks to remain which were high and firm enough to defend themselves, as on Mount Saint Michael, against its wrath. Without need of science, the traveler easily finds the law for these convulsions of nature, and their traces. Jersey and Guernsey are only to be reached by a line of small islands

and rocks, almost on a level with the water, and scattered about, sometimes near each other, sometimes parted, like kinks of a riven chain. As the traveler draws near, valleys of gorgeous green appear—cottages, flowers and meadows. This is Jersey.

Jersey and Guernsey are, to the curious eye, two gardens which the rocks hold suspended above the sea; to the thinker they are two worlds, two microcosms. Has not each of them, like the proudest continent, its shores that look upon the whole circle of the horizon? Coasts, ports, plains, mountains and valleys are all assembled in a space that can be visited in one day, from one end to the other. The climate is delightful, the vegetation fairy-like, the sky is a harmonious marriage of light with the sea, whose pearly hues seem to tell us the secret splendors of ocean treasure. Life there is a blissful dream.

If you advance a few steps in this fair realm of Guernsey, you will see manors that are created by Protestant emigration, its pious ever-living souvenirs. In returning toward the city, you will see a superb walk through trees now secular, a legacy made to the city of Saint Pierre by a Frenchman, in 1783. If you descend toward the sea, a large house will attract your eye, and you will see inscribed upon it the now famous name "Hauteville House." And there, grouped round the same thought, are Liberty, Exile and Poetry. Exile! exile! the only grief that time can never soften. If you ask me how it is endured, I will reply, through duty.

Victor Hugo's home is situated in the most lovely spot that ever landscape painter dreamed of. Placed upon a height, it overlooks the city, the fort and that immense horizon of the sea where nothing seems to trammel the flight of even genius itself. The house is celebrated in Guernsey, where it excites lively curiosity. Wonders are related of it, enhanced by the mystery overhanging a threshold till now never crossed by the Guernsey world; it is said to contain furniture worthy of an enchanter's palace.

The apartments and galleries have been entirely constructed from designs by Victor Hugo; he passed three years in drawing them. The rarest curiosities, such as carved oak belonging to the middle ages, and the *Renaissance*, with enamels, porcelain gathered together and arranged, in the most masterly manner, mingle with Venetian and Florentine wonders. The house within—for externally it presents the frigid aspect peculiar to English houses—is a work of art, the materials of which are master-pieces also. I will describe the house, which is to reveal the master, who, indeed, reveals himself by the mottoes and devices traced upon the walls and furniture. Victor Hugo, who loves to live in the past, has a mania for antique furniture. If we now raise ruins and rebuild edifices according to the laws of their primitive construction; if we reframe inscriptions, restore statuary and *basso-relievo*, we should remember that *Notre Dame de Paris*, and the *Voyage sur les bords du Rhin* helped us to do so, by giving us the rudiments of our science.

Victor Hugo's house is entered by a vestibule, the construction of which immediately arrests the eye. On the upper lintel is a *basso-relievo*, representing the principal subject of *Notre Dame de Paris*, and which is gilded and painted. The effect is charming: beauty seems to welcome you at the very entrance. The *basso-relievo*, is accompanied by glass windows with embossed panes, such as are to be found in the cottages of the Black Forest. On the right and left, in carved oak, are two medallions, left by David, after Victor Hugo and his second daughter. A column in the purest style of the *Renaissance* supports this entire mass, and adds still more to the tranquil simplicity and severity which mark the entrance.

This vestibule is lighted by the softened rays which penetrate the small squares of coarse glass, forming a *chiar' oscuro*, such as Rembrandt loved. In this soft light a monumental door is visible, that of the dining-room. On a panel is written: